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Spiegel Article on General Gehlen

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1. On 9 June I drew Fleming out on General Ahlers' article in the 26 May 1965 issue of "Der Spiegel". This article gives Ahlers' version of the Spiegel affair, and alleges that at the height of the crisis Adenauer attempted to have Gehlen arrested. Fleming discussed the article quite candidly although he qualified his remarks in a few cases by saying they were based on his recollections or that he might not have all the background. Wolmers had previously avoided a discussion of Ahlers' article and said it was based on speculation.

2. Fleming said that it was true that Adenauer had wanted to have Gehlen arrested and that he had summoned Bundesanwalt Kuhn to Bonn for this purpose. However, no actual steps to arrest Gehlen were taken and Kuhn's discussion with Gehlen was far less an interrogation (Vernehmung) than a friendly conversation.

3. Fleming said Oberst Adolf Wicht had on his own authority approved of the Spiegel printing the material in the Badingt Abwehrbericht article. Wicht did not clear the matter with Gehlen. However, Adenauer and Strauss believed Gehlen had authorized printing of this material, and that was the reason they wanted him arrested. Gehlen was not charged, as Ahlers' article has it, with illegally warning the Spiegel that action was being planned against them.

4. Fleming believes it is untrue that Strauss had telephone taps on the Spiegel offices. Fleming said that the only elements of the Defence Ministry which have any knowledge of wire taps are the AGDW and a small anti-corruption group and that neither of these units had the capability to pull off a clandestine wire tap job, or would have been trusted by Strauss to try one. Nor does Fleming believe Strauss would have risked trying such an operation through private detectives or political friends.

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Beller

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EGMA-66813

17 June 1965

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5. Fleming said that Wolfgang DOERING, the former FDP deputy floor leader mentioned in Ahlers' article, was a paid informant of the Spiegel for many years. This was discovered after DOERING died. Fleming said that a good many other politicians in Bonn were also in the Spiegel's pay.

6. Fleming discussed the Spiegel affair with complete disgust. He does not have a high opinion of German political morality and commented two or three times that such goings on would be possible only in Bonn.

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